

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application is respectfully requested.

Claims 23, 25-34, 36, 41-44, 46-48 and 50 are pending.

Applicants note with appreciation the Examiners indication that claims 35-36, 45-47, and 50-51 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims. By this Amendment, claim 23 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 35 and any intervening claim 24. Also, claim 44 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 45. The remaining, pending claims depend upon either claim 23 or claim 44. In view of the above amendments, the Examiner's art grounds of rejection have been rendered moot. Furthermore, the Examiner's informality objections have been rendered moot by the cancellation of those claims.

Claim 27 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. The Examiner contends that the recitation in claim 27 is unclear, because the Examiner does not understand what a "sound masking unit," reads upon.

The Examiner seems to be under the mistaken impression that a sound masking unit is limited to being read either on a speaker or a master hub as disclosed in the subject application. However, the sound masking unit recitations are broad enough to read on the master hub, or a combination of the master hub and an associated speaker.

Applicants respectfully submit that the recitation in claim 27 is definite and readily understandable. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw this rejection.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks and amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that each of the rejections has been addressed and overcome, placing the present application in condition for allowance. A notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant(s) hereby petition(s) for a three (3) month extension of time for filing a reply to the outstanding Office Action and submit the required \$1050 extension fee herewith.

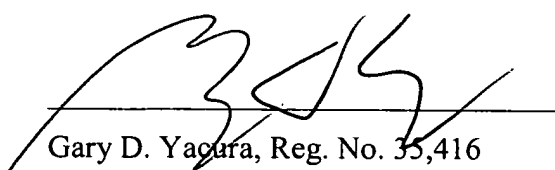
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Gary D. Yacura at the telephone number of the undersigned below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

HARNESS, DICKEY, & PIERCE, P.L.C.

By


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